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CHEAP REPOSITORY.

THE
TWO SHOEMAKERS.



Sold by J. MARSHALL,

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(T H E)

Two Shoemakers.

JACK BROWN and JAMES STOCK, were two lads apprenticed at nearly the same time, to Mr. Williams, a Shoemaker, in a small town in Oxfordshire: they were pretty near the same age, but of very different characters and dispositions.

Brown was eldest son to a farmer in good circumstances, who gave the usual 'prentice fee with him. Being a wild giddy boy, whom his father could not well manage or instruct in farming, he thought it better to send him out to learn a trade at a distance, than to let him idle about at home; for Jack always preferred bird's-nesting and marbles, to any other employment; and would trifle away half the day, when his father thought he was at school, with any boys he could meet with, who were as idle as himself; and never could be prevailed upon to do, or to learn any thing, while a game at taw could be had for love or money. All this time his little brothers, much younger than himself, were beginning to follow the plough, or to carry the corn to mill as soon as they were able to mount a cart-horse.

Jack, however, who was a lively boy, and did not naturally want either sense or good-nature, might have turned out well enough, if he had not had the misfortune to be his

mother's favourite. She concealed and forgave all his faults.---“ To be sure he was a “ little wild,” she would say, “ but he would “ not make the worse man for that, for Jack “ had a good spirit of his own, and she “ would not have it broke, and so make a “ mope of the boy.” The farmer, for a quiet life, as it is called, gave up all these points to his wife ; and, with them, gave up the future virtue and happiness of his child. He was a laborious and industrious man, but he had no religion ; he thought only of the gains and advantages of the present day, and never took the future into the account. His wife managed him entirely, and as she was really notable, he did not trouble his head about any thing farther. If she had been careless in her dairy, he would have stormed and swore ; but as she only ruined one child by indulgence, and almost broke the hearts of the rest by unkindness, he gave himself little concern about the matter. The cheese, certainly, was good, and that indeed is a great point ; but she was neglectful of her children, and a tyrant to her servants. Her husband's substance, indeed, was not wasted, but his happiness was not consulted. His house, it is true, was not dirty, but it was the abode of fury, ill-temper, and covetousness. And the farmer, who did not care for drink, was too often driven to the publick-house of an evening because his own was neither quiet nor com-

fortable. The mother was always scolding, and the children were always crying.

Jack, however, notwithstanding his idleness, picked up a little reading and writing, but never would learn to cast an account: that was too much labour. His mother was desirous he should continue at school, not so much for the sake of his learning, which she had not sense enough to value, but to save her darling from the fatigue of labour; for if he had not gone to school, she knew he must have gone to work, and she thought the former was the least tiresome of the two. Indeed this foolish woman had such an opinion of his genius, that she used, from a child, to think he was too wise for any thing but a parson, and hoped she should live to see him one. She did not wish to see her son a minister because she loved either learning or goodness, but because she thought it would make Jack a gentleman, and set him above his brothers.

Farmer Brown still hoped, that though Jack was likely to make but an idle and ignorant farmer, yet he might make no bad tradesman, when he should be removed from the indulgences of a father's house, and from a silly mother, whose fondness kept him back in every thing. This woman was entertained when she found that so fine a scholar, as she took Jack to be, was to be put apprentice to a shoemaker. The farmer, however, for the first time in his life, would have

his own way. But being a worldly man, and too apt to mind only what is falsely called *the main chance*; instead of being careful to look out for a sober, prudent, and religious master for his son, he left all that to chance; as if it had been a thing of little or no consequence. This is a very common fault; and fathers who are guilty of it, are in a great measure answerable for the future sins and errors of their children, when they grow up in the world, and set up for themselves. If a man gives his son a good education, a good example, and a good master, it is indeed *possible* that the son may not turn out well; but it does not often happen; and when it does, the father has no blame resting on him; and it is a great point towards a man's comfort to have his conscience quiet in that respect, however God may overrule events.

The farmer, however took care to desire his friends to inquire for a shoemaker who had good business, and was a good workman; and the mother did not forget to put in her word, and desired that it might be one who was not too strict; for Jack had been brought up tenderly, was a meek boy, and could not bear to be contradicted in any thing. And this is the common notion of meekness among people who know no better.

Mr. Williams was recommended to the farmer as being the best shoemaker in the town in which he lived, and far from a strict

master; and, without farther inquiries, to Mr. Williams he went.

JAMES STOCK, who was the son of an honest labourer in the next village, was bound out by the parish, in consideration of his father having so numerous a family, that he was not able to put him out himself. James was in every thing the very reverse of his new companion. He was a modest, industrious, pious youth; and though so poor, and the child of a labourer, was a much better scholar than Jack, who was a wealthy farmer's son. His father had, it is true, been able to give him but very little schooling, for he was obliged to be put to work when quite a child. When very young he used to run of errands for Mr. Thomas, the curate of the parish; a very kind-hearted young gentleman, who boarded next door to his father's cottage. He used also to rub down and saddle his horse, and do any other little job for him, in the most civil obliging manner. All this so recommended him to the clergyman, that he would often send for him in of an evening, after he had done his day's work in the field, and condescended to teach him himself to write and cast accounts, as well as to instruct him in the principles of his religion. It was not merely out of kindness for the little good-natured services James did him, that he shewed him this favour, but also for his readiness in the catechism and his devout behaviour at church,

The first thing that drew the minister's attention to this boy, was the following :--- He had frequently given him halfpence and pence for holding his horse and carrying him to water, before he was big enough to be further useful to him. On Christmas-Day he was surprised to see James at church, reading out of a handsome new prayer-book ; he wondered how he came by it, for he knew there was nobody in the parish likely to have given it to him, for at that time there were no Sunday schools ; and the father could not afford it, he was sure.

“ Well James, said he, as he saw him when they came out, you made a good figure at church to-day ; it made you look like a man and a christian, not only to have so handsome a book, but to be so ready in all parts of the service. How came you by that book ?” James owned modestly, that he had been a whole year saving up the money by single halfpence, all of which had been of the minister's own giving, and that in all that time he had not spent a single farthing on his own diversions. “ My dear boy, said good Mr. Thomas, I am much mistaken if thou dost not turn out well in the world, for two reasons :—first, from thy saving turn and self-denying temper ; and next, because thou didst devote the first eighteen-pence thou wast ever worth in the world to so good a purpose.”

James bowed and blushed, and from that

time Mr. Thomas began to take more notice of him, and to instruct him as I said above. As James soon grew able to do him more considerable service, he would now and then give him sixpence. This he constantly saved till it became a little sum, with which he bought shoes and stockings; well knowing that his poor father, with a hard family and low wages, could not buy them for him. As to what little money he earned himself by his daily labour in the field, he constantly carried it to his mother every Saturday night, to buy bread for the family, which was a pretty help to them.

As James was not over stout in his make, his father thankfully accepted the offer of the parish officers to bind out his son to a trade. This good man, however, had not, like Farmer Brown, the liberty of chusing a master for his son, or he would carefully have enquired if he was a proper man to have the care of youth; but Williams the shoemaker was already fixed on, by those who were to put the boy out, and if he wanted a master it must be him or none, for the overseers had a better opinion of Williams than he deserved, and thought it would be the making of the boy to go to him. The father knew that beggars must not be choosers, so he fitted out James for his new place, having indeed little to give him besides his blessing.

The worthy Mr. Thomas, however, kindly gave him an old coat and waistcoat, which his mother, who was a neat and notable woman, contrived to make up for him herself without a farthing expence, and when it was turned and made fit for his size, it made him a very handsome suit for Sundays, and lasted him a couple of years.

And here let me stop to remark what a pity it is, that poor women so seldom are able or willing to do these sort of little handy jobs themselves; and that they do not oftener bring up their daughters to be more useful in family work. They are great losers by it every way; not only as they are disqualifying their girls from making good wives hereafter, but they are losers in point of present advantage: for gentlefolks could much oftener afford to give a poor boy a jacket or a waistcoat, if it was not for the expence of making it, which adds very much to the cost. To my certain knowledge, many poor women would often get an old coat, or a bit of coarse new cloth given them to fit out a boy, if the mothers or sisters were known to be able to cut it out to advantage, and to make it decently themselves. But half-a-crown for the making a bit of kersey, which costs him but a few shillings, is more than many very charitable gentry can afford to give—so they often give nothing at all, when they see the mothers so little able to turn it to

advantage. It is hoped they will take this hint kindly, as it is meant for their good.

But to return to our two young shoemakers. They were both now settled at Mr. Williams's, who, as he was known to be a good workman, had plenty of business. He had sometimes two or three journeymen, but no apprentices but Jack and James.

Jack, who, with all his faults, was a keen, smart boy, took to learn the trade quick enough, but the difficulty was to make him stick two hours together to his work. At every noise he heard in the street, down went the work—the last one way, the upper leather another; the sole dropped on the ground, and the thread he dragged after him, all the way up the street. If a blind fiddler, a ballad singer, a mountebank, a dancing bear, or a drum, were heard at a distance—out ran Jack—nothing could stop him, and very not a stitch more could he be prevailed on now to do that day. Every duty, every promise was forgot, for the present pleasure—he could not resist the smallest temptation—he never stopped for a moment to consider whether a thing was right or wrong, but whether he liked it or disliked it. And as for his ill-judging mother took care to send him privately a good supply of pocket money, that deadly bane to all youthful virtue, he had generally a few pence ready to spend, and to indulge in the present diversion whatever it was. And what was

still worse than even spending his money, he spent his time too, or rather his master's time. Of this he was continually reminded by James, to whom he always answered, "What have you to complain about? It is nothing to you or any one else; I spend nobody's money But my own." That may be, replied the other, but you cannot say it is your own *time* that you spend. He insisted upon it that it was; but James fetched down their *indentures*, and there shewed him that he had solemnly bound himself by that instrument, not to waste his master's property. Now, quoth James, "*thy own time*" is a very valuable part of thy master's property." To this he replied, "Every one's time was his own, and he should not sit moping all day over his last—for his part, he thanked God, he was no parish'prentice."

James did not resent this piece of foolish impertinence, as some silly lads would have done; nor fly out into a violent passion: for even at this early age, he had begun to learn of him who was meek and lowly of heart; and therefore when he was reviled, he reviled not again. On the contrary he was so very kind and gentle, that even Jack, vain and idle as he was, could not help loving him, though he took care never to follow his advice.

Jack's fondness for his boyish and silly diversions in the street, soon produced the effects which might naturally be expected;

out into the town at the sound of a fiddle, or the sight of a puppet-show, soon led him to those places where all these fiddles and shows naturally lead; I mean the ALEHOUSE. The acquaintance picked up in the street was carried on at the Greyhound; and the idle pastimes of the boy soon led to the destructive vices of the man.

As he was not an ill-tempered youth, nor naturally much given to drink; a sober and prudent master, who had been steady in his management, and regular in his own conduct; who had recommended good advice by a good example, might have made something of Jack. But I am sorry to say, that Mr. Williams, though a good workman and not a very hard or severe master, was neither a sober nor a steady man—so far from it, that he spent much more time at the Greyhound, than at home. There was no order either in his shop or family. He left the chief care of the business to his two young apprentices; and being but a worldly man, he was at first disposed to shew favour to Jack much more than to James, because he had more money, and his father was better in the world than the father of poor James.

At first, therefore, he was disposed to consider James as a sort of drudge, who was to do all the menial work of the family, and he did not care how little he taught him of his trade. With Mrs. Williams the matter was still worse: she constantly called him

away from the business of his trade to wash the house, nurse the child, turn the spit, or run of errands. And here I must remark, that though parish apprentices are bound in duty to be submissive both to master and mistress, and always to make themselves as useful as they can in a family, and to be civil and humble; yet on the other hand, it is the duty of masters always to remember, that if they are paid for instructing them in their trade, they ought conscientiously to instruct them in it, and not to employ them the greater part of their time in such household or other drudgery, as to deprive them of the opportunity of acquiring their trade.

Mr. Williams soon found out that his favourite Jack would be of little use to him in the shop; for though he worked well enough, he did not care how little he did. Nor could he be of the least use to his master in keeping an account, or writing out a bill upon occasion, for, as he never could be made to learn to cypher, he did not know addition from multiplication.

One day one of the customers called at the shop in a great hurry, and desired his bill might be made out that minute; Mr. Williams, having taken a cup too much, made several attempts to put down a clear account, but the more he tried, the less he found himself able to do it. James, who was sitting at his last, rose up, and with great modesty, asked his master if he would please

to give him leave to make out the bill, saying that, though but a poor scholar, he would do his best, rather than keep the gentleman waiting. Williams gladly accepted his offer, and confused as his head was with liquor, he yet was able to observe with what neatness, dispatch, and exactness, the account was drawn out. From that time he no longer considered James as a drudge, but as one fitted for the higher employments of the trade, and he was now regularly employed to manage the accounts, with which all the customers were so well pleased, that it contributed greatly to raise him in his master's esteem; for there were now never any of those blunders or false charges, for which the shop had before been so famous.

James went on in a regular course of industry, and soon became the best workman Mr. Williams had, but there were many things in the family which he greatly disapproved. Some of the journeymen used to swear, drink, and sing very licentious songs. All these things were a great grief to his sober mind; he complained to his master, who only laughed at him; and indeed, as Williams did the same himself, he put it out of his own power to correct his servants, if he had been so disposed. James, however, used always to reprove them with great mildness indeed, but with great seriousness also. This, but still more his own excellent example, produced at length very

good effects on such of the men as were not quite hardened in sin.

What grieved him most, was the manner in which the Sunday was spent. The master lay in bed all the morning, nor did the mother or her children ever go to church, except there was some new finery to be shewn, or a christening to be attended. The town's people were coming to the shop all the morning, for work which should have been sent home the night before, had not the master been at the ale-house. And what wounded James to the very soul was, that the master expected the two apprentices to carry home shoes to the country customers on the Sunday morning; which he wickedly thought was a saving of time, as it prevented their hindering their work on the Saturday. These shameful practices greatly afflicted poor James; he begged his master, with tears in his eyes, to excuse him, but he only laughed at his squeamish conscience, as he called it.

Jack did not dislike this part of the business, and generally after he had delivered his parcel, wasted good part of the day in nutting, playing at fives, or dropping in at the public-house: any thing was better than going to church.

James, on the other hand, when he was compelled, sorely against his conscience, to carry home any goods of a Sunday morning, always got up as soon as it was light, knelt down and prayed heartily to God to forgive

him a sin which it was not in his power to avoid; he took care not to lose a moment by the way, but as he was taking his walk with the utmost speed, to leave his shoes with the customers, he spent his time in endeavouring to keep up good thoughts in his mind, and praying that the day might come when his conscience might be delivered from this grievous burthen. He was now particularly thankful, that Mr. Thomas had formerly taught him so many psalms and chapters, which he used to repeat in these walks with great devotion.

He always got home before the rest of the family was up, dressed himself very clean, and went twice to church; and as he greatly disliked the company and practices of his master's house, particularly on the Sabbath-day, he preferred spending his evening alone, reading his Bible, which I forgot to say the worthy clergyman had given him when he left his native village. Sunday evening, which is to some people such a burthen, was to James the highest holiday. He had formerly learnt a little how to sing a psalm of the clerk of his own parish, and this was now become a very delightful part of his evening exercise. And as one of the journeymen, by James's advice and example, was now beginning to be of a more serious way of thinking, he often asked him to sit an hour with him, when they read the Bible, and talked it over together in a man-

ner very pleasant and improving; and as this man was a famous singer, a psalm or two sung together, was a very innocent pleasure.

James's good manners and civility to the customers drew much business to the shop, and his skill as a workman was so great, that every one desired his shoes might be made by James. Williams grew so very idle and negligent, that he now totally neglected his affairs, and to hard drinking added deep gaming. All James's care, both of the shop and the accounts, could not keep things in any tolerable order: he represented to his master that they were growing worse and worse; and exhorted him, if he valued his credit as a tradesman, his comfort as a husband and father, his character as a master, and his soul as a christian, to turn over a new leaf. Williams swore a great oath, that he would not be restrained in his pleasures to please a canting parish 'prentice, nor to humour a parcel of squalling brats—that let people say what they would of him, they should never say he was a hypocrite, and as long as they could not call him that, he did not care what else they called him.

In a violent passion he immediately went to the Greyhound, where he now spent, not only every evening, which he had long done, but good part of the day and night also. His wife was very dressy, extravagant, and fond of company, and spent at home as fast as her husband did abroad; so that all the

neighbours said, if it had not been for James his master must have broke long ago, but they were sure he could not hold it much longer.

As Jack Brown sung a good song, and played many diverting tricks, Williams liked his company, and often allowed him to make one at the Greyhound, where he would laugh heartily at his stories; so that every one thought Jack was much the greater favourite—so he was a companion in frolick, and foolery, and *pleasure*, as it is called; but he would not trust him with an inch of leather or sixpence in money: No, no—when business was to be done, or trust was to be reposed, James was the man: the idle and the drunken never trust one another, if they have common sense. They like to laugh, and sing, and riot, and drink together; but when they want a friend, a counsellor, a help in business or in trouble, they go farther afield; and Williams, while he would drink with Jack, would trust James with untold gold: and even was foolishly tempted to neglect his business the more from knowing that he had one at home who was taking care of it.

In spite of all James's care and diligence, however, things were growing worse and worse: the more James saved, the more his master and mistress spent. One morning, just as the shop was opened, and James had set every body to their respective work, and he himself was settling the business for the day, he found that his master was not yet

come from the Greyhound. As this wattle now become a common case, he only grieved at it but did not wonder at it. Whilst he was indulging sad thoughts on what would be the end of all this, in ran the tapster from the Greyhound out of breath, and with a look of terror and dismay, desired James would step over to the publick-house with him that moment, for that his master wanted him.

James went immediately, surprized at this unusual message. When he got into the kitchen of the publick-house, which he now entered for the first time in his life, though it was opposite the house in which he lived, he was shocked at the beastly disgusting appearance of every thing he beheld. There was a table covered with tankards, punch-bowls, broken glasses, pipes, and dirty greasy packs of cards, and all over wet with liquor; the floor was strewed with broken earthen cups, odd cards, and an E O table shivered to pieces in a quarrel; behind the table stood a crowd of dirty fellows, with matted locks, hollow eyes, and faces smeared with tobacco; James made his way after the tapster, through this wretched looking crew, to a settle which stood in the chimney corner. Not a word was uttered, but the silent horror seemed to denote something more than a mere common drunken bout.

What was the dismay of James, when he saw his miserable master stretched out on the settle, in all the agonies of death. He had

fallen into a fit, after having drank hard best
 relieved part of the night, and seemed to have but a
 few minutes to live. In his frightful counte-
 nance was displayed the dreadful picture of
 pain and death; for he struggled at once un-
 der the guilt of intoxication, and the pangs
 of a dying man. He recovered his senses
 for a few moments, and called out to ask if
 his faithful servant was come: James went
 up to him, took him by his cold hand, but
 was too much moved to speak. "Oh!
 James, James," cried he in a broken voice,
 "pray for me, comfort me." James spoke
 kindly to him, but was too honest to give
 him false comfort, as is too often done by
 mistaken friends in these dreadful moments.

"James," said he, "I have been a bad
 master to you—you would have saved me
 soul and body, but I would not let you—I
 have ruined my wife, my children, and my
 own soul. Take warning, oh, take warn-
 ing by my miserable end," said he to his
 stupified companions; but none were able
 to attend to him but James, who bid him
 lift up his heart to God, and prayed heartily
 for him himself. "Oh!" said the dying
 man, "it is too late, too late for me—but
 you have still time," said he to the half-
 drunken terrified crew around him. Where
 is Jack? Jack Brown came forward, but
 was too much frightened to speak. "O
 wretched boy," said he, "I fear I shall
 have the ruin of thy soul, as well as my

“ own, to answer for. -Stop short!—Take
 “ warning—now, in the days of thy youth.”
 “ O James, James, thou dost not pray for me.
 “ Death is dreadful to the wicked—O the
 “ sting of death to a guilty conscience!”
 Here he lifted up his ghastly eyes in speech-
 less horror, grasped hard the hand of James,
 gave a deep hollow groan, and closed his eyes
 never to open them but in an awful eternity.

This was death in all its horrors! The
 gay companions of his sinful pleasures could
 not stand the sight; all flunk away like
 guilty thieves from their late favourite friend
 ---no one was left to assist him but his two
 apprentices. Brown was not so hardened but
 that he shed many tears for his unhappy mas-
 ter; and even made some hasty resolutions of
 amendment, which were too soon forgotten.

While Brown stepped home to call the
 workmen to come and assist in removing
 their poor master, James staid alone with
 the corpse, and employed those awful mo-
 ments in indulging the most serious thoughts,
 and praying heartily to God, that so terrible
 a lesson might not be thrown away upon
 him; but that he might be enabled to live
 in a constant state of preparation for death.
 The resolutions he made at this moment, as
 they were not made in his own strength, but
 in an humble reliance on God's gracious
 help, were of use to him as long as he lived;
 and if ever he was for a moment tempted to
 say, or do a wrong thing, the remembrance

of his poor dying master's last agonies, and the dreadful words he uttered, always instantly checked him.

When Williams was buried, and his affairs came to be inquired into, they were found to be in a sad condition. His wife, indeed, was the less to be pitied, as she had contributed her full share to their common ruin. James, however, did pity her, and by his skill in accounts, his known honesty, and the trust the creditors put in his word, things came to be settled rather better than Mrs. Williams expected.

Both Brown and James were now within a month or two of being out of their time. The creditors, as was said before, employed James to settle his late master's accounts, which he did in a manner so creditable to his abilities, and his honesty, that they proposed to him to take the shop himself. He assured them it was utterly out of his power for want of money. As the creditors had not the least fear of being repaid, if it should please God to spare his life, they generously agreed among themselves, to advance him a small sum of money without any security but his bond; for this he was to pay a very reasonable interest, and to return the whole in a given number of years. James shed tears of gratitude at this testimony to his character, and could hardly be prevailed on to accept their kindness, so great was his dread of being in debt.

He took the remainder of the lease from his mistress, and in settling affairs with her, took care to make every thing as advantageous to her as possible. He never once allowed himself to think how unkind she had been to him, he only saw in her the needy widow of his deceased master, and the distressed mother of an infant family; and was heartily sorry it was not in his power to contribute to their support, for it was not only his duty, but his delight to return good for evil—for he was a CHRISTIAN.

James Stock was now, by the blessing of God on his own earnest endeavours, master of a considerable shop, and was respected by the whole town for his prudence, honesty, and piety. How he behaved in his new station, and also what befel his comrade Brown, must be the subject of another book; and I hope my readers will look forward with some impatience for some further account of this worthy young man. In the mean time, other apprentices will do well to follow so praise-worthy an example, and to remember, that the respectable master of a large shop, and a profitable business, was raised to that creditable situation, without money, friends, or connections, from the low beginning of a *parish* 'prentice, by sobriety, industry, *the fear of God*, and an obedience to the divine principles of the CHRISTIAN RELIGION. Z.

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